

The Second Page

The Independent
Gallup, N.M.
Wednesday, September 7

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McCann ...

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at our own spin on it."

Whether true or not, McCann said the perception of wrongdoing is there.

He said the tribe does not need another press secretary, or a public relations firm, but rather a management firm.

Officials of the Madison Group were quick to take exception to McCann's comments Tuesday.

Pete Segall, executive vice president of the Madison Group, called McCann's statements about the firm "ridiculous."

"He was on the scene for six weeks and that hasn't given him enough time to understand a dispute that's 100 years old," Segall said. He added that he believed McCann had been overwhelmed by the job and to make a graceful exit, "found a bad guy."

Another reason for his resignation, McCann said, was that a Madison consultant had told him Sunday that "things would only get worse."

Segall said he had told McCann this, but that McCann may have not understood the context. He and McCann had been talking about the

Week's Wash column in Saturday's *Independent* that dealt with McCann.

Segall said he told McCann that as far as any criticism by the press is concerned, that it probably would only get worse.

"The hard knocks were a little harder than what he wanted," Segall said.

Navajo government policies are being made from thousands of miles away, McCann said, referring to the Madison Group in Washington.

"We don't make tribal policy in any situation in any context," Segall countered. He said the firm takes orders from the chairman, Al Henderson, director of the Commission to Accelerate Navajo Development Opportunities, or the Navajo Tribal Council.

Segall also said it was Sidney who has been confrontational — rather than MacDonald — by showing up in Window Rock unannounced and expecting to meet with the chairman.

"It's unfortunate that the press secretary took Ivan Sidney's side on this without studying it diligently," Segall said.

In offering to negotiate with MacDonald, Sidney has declared that certain issues be off-limits for discussion, Segall added.

Concerning Project Hope, Segall said the Madison Group is indeed trying to bring national attention to the plight of Navajos living on Hopi Partitioned Lands and the Bennett Freeze.

McCann said he would get phone calls from the Madison Group, asking "How can we build this up? What kind of images can be created?"

"Project Hope is not about images, it's about people," McCann added.

Mistakes will be made, but the blame should not be placed on others, McCann said. However, he said he found the opposite to be true upon his arrival in Window Rock.

"Everything is the fault of the federal government or the BIA. Just from my limited exposure here, the constant fingerpointing that exists — that doesn't accomplish anything," McCann said.

"It's time for a new aura of cooperation between the chairman and (Peterson) Zah," McCann said, ad-



David McCann

ding that he has no personal animosity of MacDonald.

There is a career risk in speaking out, McCann admitted, but that the truth is better than "distortion and dishonesty." He said he was unsure of what his plans will be.

MacDonald also issued a pre-statement Tuesday, saying he regretted McCann's resignation remarks.

"Project Hope is first and foremost a humanitarian, not a confrontational campaign," MacDonald said. "No confrontations have place. We are simply out there pairing houses."

"We use our media group in Washington, D.C., to get our message across to those who need to hear and to those who are in a position to help: Congress, the media and the general public."

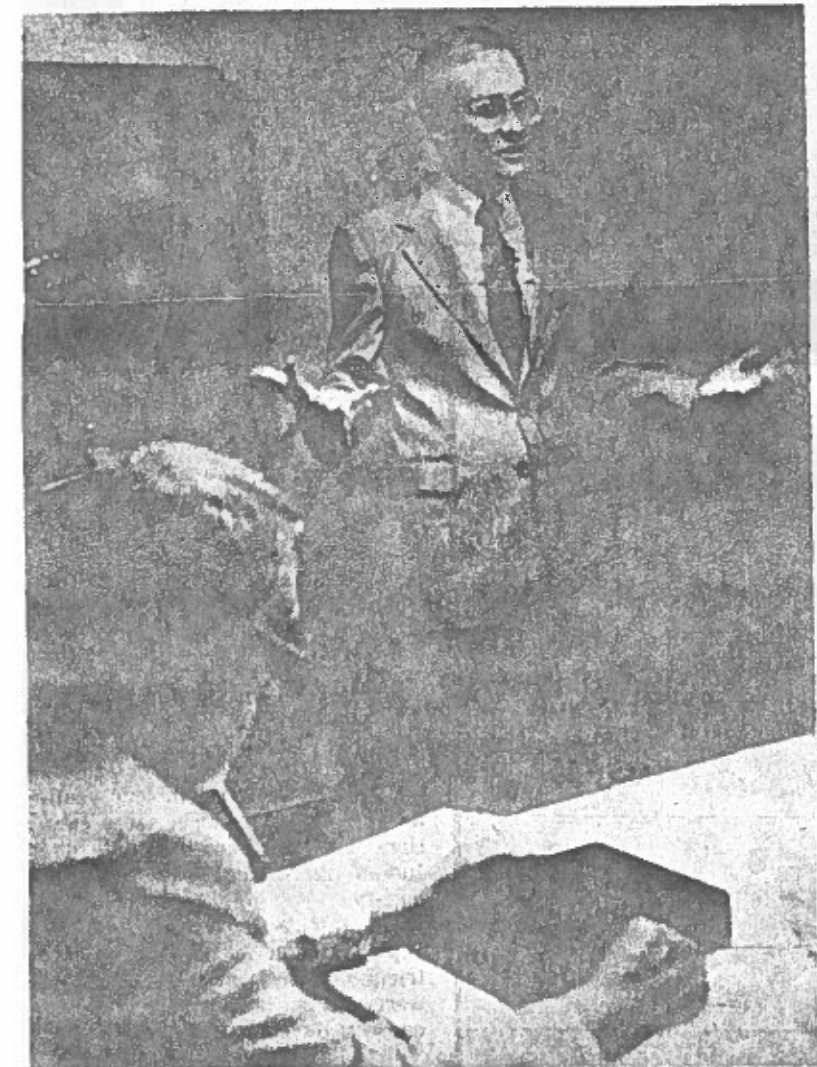
"There is a level of commitment in the chairman's office that runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As far as we can tell, Mr. McCann is not ready to make that commitment," MacDonald said.

Although the Madison Group initially screened more than 100 resumes for the press secretary position, it was MacDonald who viewed the finalists and selected McCann.

Meanwhile, the tribe now has a Navajo interim press staff consisting of Wood Tome and Ferlin Clark.

Tome is an administrative services officer with the Division of Law and Safety and was associate editor of the monthly *Navajo Nation* newspaper.

Clark had been the public relations coordinator for the Navajo Land Festival of the Arts.



Staff photo by Beverly Shilling

Former Navajo Press Secretary David McCann addresses reporters on Tuesday in Gallup.